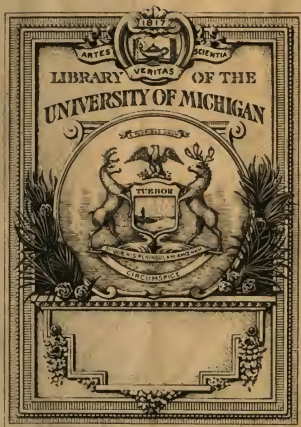


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D. Wilhelmo Archi-  
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à Sacris Domest.*

Goodman, John

T H E  
Golden Rule,  
Or, T H E  
ROYAL LAW  
O F  
EQUITY  
E X P L A I N E D.

Οἱ ἀίθρωποι ὀκοφει γινάσκομεν τὸ λέγει.  
Theophyl. in Rom.

L O N D O N,

Printed by Samuel Roycroft, for Robert  
Clavell at the Peacock at the West-  
End of St. Pauls, 1688.

© John Smith

ROYAL LAM

OR  
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IN THE  
REIGN OF  
CHARLES II.

By  
J. B. Smith

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T H E

**Golden Rule,**

Or, T H E

R O Y A L L A W

O F

**E Q U I T Y**

E X P L A I N E D.

**T**H E R E never was any Law,  
Human or Divine; nor any  
Principle of Common Rea-  
son and Philosophy, which hath  
been more universally Received and  
Acknowledged, than that Aphorism

## The Golden Rule.

of our Saviours, which he delivers *Matt. 7. 12. Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* It hath been Admir'd both by Jews and Gentils, as well as Christians: Amongst the former, it was the Cognizance of the greatest and most eminent Sect or Party of them, viz. the School of *Hillel*. Amongst the latter, It is well known that *Severus* (one of the Best and Wisest of the Roman Emperours) was so taken with it, that He not only had this Saying frequently in his Mouth, but caused it to be Inscribed as his Motto upon his Banners. In a word, It is a Maxim subscribed to and owned by the Men of all Ages, Countries, Sects, Qualities, and Conditions; for indeed (as we shall see Anon) the Reason of it is as clear as the Light, the Date of it is as Ancient as Mankind, and its Obligation as Indissoluble as the very Frame of Nature.

Besides



Besides all this, It is evident at the first Blush, that there neither is, nor ever was, any Precept of any Religion or Institution whatsoever, which was or could be more exactly Calculated for the Improving of the State of Mankind, or for the Maintaining of Justice and Equity, Peace and Love in the World, than this is.

It may justly seem a Wonder therefore how it should come to pass, that so little Fruit should grow from so pregnant a Root! And that when all Men so unanimously pretend to such a common Principle of Equity, there should notwithstanding be so much Uneasiness, and so many Complaints in the World; such Frauds and Injustice, Oppressions and Persecutions; and such mutual Accusations and Recriminations. And to Assoil this Difficulty, one must of necessity either pass a very severe Censure  
A 4 upon

## The Golden Rule.

upon a great part of Mankind, as acting inconsistently with themselves, and contradicting their Avowed Principles by their Practices; or else on the other side, one must suppose that as great a Party of Men as the former, do not understand this Common Rule, or have not considered the Force and Obligation of it

Now the latter of these being the more Charitable Conjecture of the two, it will be the more allowable to lay the Blame of the Miscarriage there: However, I will endeavour (as far as I am able) to apply a Remedy to both in this present Paper; Wherein my design is, to give a brief and plain Exposition of this great Law of Nature, and of the Gospel. And although a Discourse of this Nature may seem a little out of Fashion, and Alien to the humor of the present Times; yet (besides that I hope the Brevity may in some measure Atone for the

the

the Unfashionableness ) I am persuaded that ( all things duly considered ) there is hardly any thing else ( which may be comprized in so little Room ) can be done more seasonably for the Age we live in, or whereby one can express more good Will to all Mankind in general.

Therefore I will proceed in this Method :

1. I will plainly •lay open the genuine Meaning of this Rule.
2. I will shew the Natural and Universal Equity of it.
3. I will describe the just Bounds and Limits of its Obligation.
4. I will specific some of the Cases which it Over-rules and Determines.

And

And then Lastly, For a Conclusion, I will represent the happy Effects and Advantages of Living and Acting accordingly.

I. *For the Explication of this Rule.*

Towards the understanding of this *Aphorism*, there is nothing more requisite to be supposed, than (that which cannot be doubted or denyed, namely,) That there is such a Principle in us as *Self-Love*. And this (considered in it self) is not only innocent and allowable, but useful and necessary: For it is not the Issue of the Corruption and Depravation of our Nature, but implanted in us by our Creator for great and wise Purposes, partly to be a Guard and Preservative of our Beings; partly to sweeten our Lives to us; but principally to be the Foundation of all his Laws; or at least the great Engine by which He moves and governs

governs us. For by this Handle of our *Self-Love* God Almighty takes hold of us; by this Helm he turns us about agreeably to his own Designs: For it is evident, that if we had no delight in our Selves, no tenderness for our own Concerns, it would be to no effect to propound Laws to us, and to back them with the Threatnings and Promises of Rewards and Punishments; and consequently it would be only in the Power of the Almighty to destroy us, (if he pleased) but impossible to govern us.

Now that which is peculiar to the Case in hand is this, That whereas in all other Instances of our Duty towards G O D, this Principle of *Self-Love* is (as I said before) only an Hank upon us, or the Motive of our Obedience. Now here in this Law of *Loving our Neighbour*, it is not only the Motive, but the Rule and Measure also of our Duty. So that hereby  
we

we have a ready Way to resolve our Selves of the Manner of our Carriage; and all our Actions towards others. For GOD having made it our Duty in the General, to Love our Neighbour as our Self; there is then no more to be done, but to turn our Eye inward, and consult that *Urim* and *Thummim* in our own Breasts, and we are presently instructed in all the Particulars of that Duty. Neither is there any need we should trouble our Selves to consult *Books* or *Philosophers*, or *Lawyers* or *Casuists*; having a standing Oracle in our own Bosoms, which will as certainly determine us.

This is a Standard which can never fail us, till we Desert or can Hate our Selves, which is impossible.

And

And it is a full and sufficient Standard too; for no Man will be Niggardly toward himself; and if I give other Men the same Measure I use to my Self, there can be no cause of Complaint.

And it is as easie and plain, and ready at hand, as it is full and certain; for it is but turning the *Tables*, and supposing my Case to be my Neighbours, or his to be Mine, and my Way is plain before me. It is possible I may Envy my Neighbour, and that may tempt me to give a wrong Judgment; but then do but change the Scales, and put Him in my place and my Self in his, and I cannot but be impartial: For though I have a Prejudice against Him, I have none against my Self. It is possible also, That my Neighbour may be greedy, and unreasonably desire of me more than is fit; but to decide the Point, let me but put my self in his stead,  
and

and bethink my self what I should judge then equal for me to desire of Him; and so much and no more is due from Me to Him. Moreover, when Men are in Prosperity, there is nothing more common than for such to Contemn and Brow-beat those that are in Adversity; and on the other side, it is as ordinary for Men in Adversity to Envy and Malign, and Censure those in Prosperity. Now to discover the Evil of both those, and withal to gain to our Selves a Rule of our Carriage in either Case, let the *Tables* be turned, and for the present suppose the Rich Man to be the Poor Man, and the Poor Man to become the Rich, and then we shall see what is fit on both sides. For most certainly, if this Rich Man was put in the Scale of the Poor, he would think it very hard to be despised meerly because he is Poor, and to have his Calamity imputed to him as his Crime, or his Folly; but would think it

Just



Just (for all that difference of Condition) that he should be kindly and humanly Treated in his Adversity. On the other side, Put the Poor Man into the Rich Mans place and he would assuredly think, that though a Man is not always the wiser or better Man for being Rich; yet there is some Respect due to his Place and Quality, and he would not think he deserved to be called a Proud Man meerly for keeping up his Post and Character; and thus both Parties judge right and speak Truth in their own Case, that could not discern it in anothers. And thus we see the use of an Appeal to this Principle of *Self-Love*, and that in so doing we have a *Chancery* and Court of Equity in our own Bosoms. And so we have the meaning of this Rule, which was the first thing propounded.

2. *Now Secondly, For the Equity and Natural Obligation of this Rule.*

This will appear upon a double Account, *viz.* partly from the actual Equality of Nature in all Men, and partly from the Possibility and Probability of Equality of Condition in all Men, one time or other.

*First,* It is naturally fit and reasonable, that we should carry an Even hand between our selves and other Men, *and Love our Neighbour as our Self*, forasmuch as he is properly as our self, there being an actual Equality of Nature in all Men: For whatsoever difference there may happen to be in mens outward Circumstances, all That is but Accidental, and when they are considered as divested of those Circumstances, they are all substantially alike. All have the same  
 Creator,

Creator, and stand in the same Relation to God; all Mens Bodies were made out of the same Earth, and (as it were) cast in the same Mold; they are all born alike, and dye alike: And for their Souls, they are equal too, all have the same Divine Image upon them, the same Faculties, and Reason is the same throughout the World. Consequently of this they are all common Citizens of the World, and (as to Nature) have an equal share in it. Now *æqualibus æqualia tribuere*, to deal alike between those that are equal in themselves, is a first Principle of Reason in all Mankind, and therefore to deal by our Neighbour as we would be dealt by our selves, is an universal and indispensable Law of Justice.

*Secondly*, There is a possibility, if not a probability of the equality of all mens Conditions and

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Circumstances one time or other; he that is now rich may be poor, and he that is poor may become rich; the Man of Dignity and Power may be depressed, and the mean Man may be exalted; and such Changes are so frequent, that he must be prodigiously vain and stupid, that doth not apprehend it may be his own Case at one time or other; and if he be apprehensive of such a vicissitude of things, he will have all the reason in the World to provide for it accordingly, that is, if he now be on the advantage Ground, he will yet be humble, and modest, and merciful towards his Inferiours, and those in Adversity: And if he be now at the bottom, he will hope his Condition may mend, and in the mean time think such thoughts of those above him, as he would be willing should be entertained concerning himself when the tyde is turned.

turned. And he that doth not so, is neither just for the present, nor provident for the future; for he hath no certain measure of his Actions, but goes by a Rule now, which he would be loath to stand to at another time. And so much for that; I proceed to shew

3. *The just Bounds and Limits of this Axiom.*

However easie and expedite this Rule may seem to be (by what we have hitherto said) yet it is notoriously certain, That there are very great and frequent Mistakes in the Application of it, whilst some take it in so large a sense as to supersede all other Laws, both Humane and Divine, by it; and others as much restraining and straitening the Scope of it, make it indeed no Rule at all, but a bare Saying to serve a turn by now and then. There-

fore I think it necessary, before I proceed in the Deduction of Practical Consequences from this Axiom, to lay down the following Particulars for the more full Explication of it. And

*First*, It is to be considered, That this Rule or Aphorism before us, is only intended for the Government of our Actions towards Men, not for a Measure of Religion ( properly so called ) or of our Carriage towards God. For he being infinite in all Perfections, there is nothing in us that we can appeal to as a Measure of what is due towards him. Neither is it enough for us to love God as we love our selves, for he being infinitely better than our selves, it is consequently our duty to love him better than we love our selves, namely with all our heart, and soul, and strength; and if more than

than that was possible to be performed by us, it would be due to him accordingly. But now it is sufficient that I love my Neighbour as my self, because (as I have shewed) he is like my self, or a kind of second self, and it would be a kind of Injustice to love him better than my self, because then I do not *æqualibus æqualia tribuere*. And consequently I cannot be naturally bound to dye for my Neighbour, because this supposes that I ought to love him better than my self. But on the other side, I am bound (if occasion be, and when God's Honour requires it) to dye for God, because he is infinitely better than my self, and therefore is to be preferr'd before my Life, or whatsoever else is dearest to me.

This I think is plain enough, and needed not to have been said here, but for the sake of some conceited Moralists ( as they love to be called ) who shrink up all Religion into this one Precept of *doing as they would be done unto*; as if this was not only the whole Decalogue, but their Creed and *Pater noster* too. And for countenance of this absurd Perswasion, they insist upon those words which our Saviour adds as an *Encomium* of the Maxim aforesaid, *For this is the Law and the Prophets*, as if this one Saying comprehended the whole Doctrine of the Old and New Testament.

But it is very plain that those latter words of our Saviour ought not, nor can be so loosely understood; for to imagine him to assert that this one great Maxim expresseth the whole Duty of Man,

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is to suppose him to make void all Divine Revelation, and to take away all necessity either of Old or New Testament, forasmuch as this Rule is clear enough of it self by the meer Light of Nature, and accordingly hath been acknowledged by those that never had any other Light to guide them, as we have intimated already.

Besides, Man is not our only Correlative, but we stand in Relation to a God that made us, as well as to Man that is made like us, and therefore the greatest and highest part of our Duty results from that higher Relation, and those greater Obligations we have upon us towards God, than towards one another. In Contemplation of which a Heathen could say, *Quid aliud est Pietas quam Justitia adversus Deos*; that Piety is Justice, and that neglect

## The Golden Rule.

of Religious observance of the Divine Majesty is as manifest Injustice towards him, as any instance of Fraud or Violence towards our Neighbour can amount unto.

The meaning therefore of our Saviour in those additional words, *This is the Law and the Prophets*, can be no more but this, *viz.* That the Rule aforesaid is the sum of the Second Table of the Law, and of the Expositions and Paraphrases of the Prophets upon it. For accordingly we observe in a parallel place, *Matth. 22. 36.* when a Lawyer asks this Question, *Master, which is the great Commandment of the Law:* Our Saviour answers, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; this is the first and great Commandment: And the second is like unto it, namely,*  
*Thou*

*Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self:* And then adds, *On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Where we see, beyond all dispute, that the whole Model of our Duty, nor the intire design of the Law and Prophets, is not comprized in one of these Rules, but in both together.

*Secondly,* It is further considerable, That even in relation to our Neighbour, and in the conduct and government of our Actions towards Men, this Maxim is rather to be looked upon as a Measure than a Law properly so called: My meaning is, That the use of it is rather to prescribe to us how much we should do, than what we should do, or as that which rather determines the proportion of our Actions, than justifies the matter of them. To speak more plainly yet, (if it be possible) I say this Rule is intended

tended principally to direct us what Measures we are to take, and what Proportion to observe, in the Discharge of such an Action towards our Neighbour, where and when the Action or Thing it self in the general is already known to be certainly lawful; not for a Law properly to warrant the thing we are about, whatsoever it is. For if it was otherwise, a common Drunkard might justify his endeavour of debauching other Men into that beastly Vice, under this pretence, That he doth nothing in that case, but what he is content should be done to himself. And the Lascivious person, so he might be allowed to defile his Neighbours Bed, would perhaps be content another should do as much for him. And no question but a dexterous Cheat would allow others to cheat him if they could, provided he might exercise his Talent

lent that way without controle.

Therefore (as I said) this Axiom doth not priviledge evil Actions, no nor so much as determine any Action to be good meerly upon the reciprocal inclination of mens minds. For this were at once to repeal all the Laws of God and Man, and under pretence of making every man a Law to himself, to make him absolutely lawless: But it only prescribes the measure of our Actions *in materiâ licita & honesta.*

For example; Suppose I am in deliberation with my self, how I ought to carry my self towards my poor Brother in his Adversity, and what Relief I am bound to give him, or how far I ought to strain my self in his Case. Here now I am certain that the thing I deliberate about is lawful and good in the general; and then  
this

this Rule comes seasonably in for my direction in the measure of my Performance, *viz.* It tells me that I am to deal by that poor man, just as I would be dealt with by him, if his Case were mine, and mine were his. But now on the other side, Suppose the thing I am deliberating about, be the retaliating of an Injury, or the revenging my self upon him that hath done me wrong; Here now I must first see a Law justifying me in revenging my self, before I can resolve my self of the measure of Revenge which I am to take. For it will not be a sufficient Warrant to me, that I intend to proceed equitably, or that I will do by that man only just as in like Case I would be content to be done unto. But I must first be sure that it is lawful for me to revenge my self, and that I do not break another Law, usurping God's Prerogative, who

who hath told us *Vengeance is his.*

*Thirdly*, Moreover if this Business be well considered, we shall find that this Maxim is not absolutely a Rule *in materiâ licita & honesta* neither, but only *in re debitâ*. My meaning is, That to apply this Maxim to its peculiar use and intent, we must not only be satisfied antecedently, that the Matter of the Action we are about be in it self lawful, (without which we have seen already that *to do as we would be done by* will not bear us out) but it is also required that that very Measure of that Thing or Action which this Rule obliges me to observe towards my Neighbour, be such as I should think was due and of right belonging to me, if the Case was mine, as it is now another mans. For I am not bound to do to another

other all that which it is lawful for him to do to me, no, nor all that which I could wish he should do to me; nor on the other side am I bound to refrain from doing to him that which I could heartily wish he should refrain from doing to me; but my Obligation from this Rule principally lies in this, that I both do, or refrain from doing (respectively) towards him, all that which (turning the Tables and then consulting my own Heart and Conscience) I should think that Neighbour of mine *bound* to do, or to refrain from doing towards me in the like Case.

As for Example; If I was in extreme Poverty, when my Neighbour was in as great Affluence and Prosperity, no doubt but I should be easily tempted to wish, That he out of his Abundance should not only re-  
lieve



lieve my present and urgent Necessity, or supply me from Hand to Mouth (as we say) but also that he should pour out his Surplusage upon me, and once for all by a great Effort of Charity, put me quite out of my distressed Condition. This, I say, I could wish in my own Case; and there is no doubt but that it is in it self lawful for such a Rich man as aforesaid, so to do if he pleases; yet for all this I cannot think him bound so to do, or that he sins if he doth not so; for I cannot find that if the Tables were turned, I should think it to be a sin in my self not to do so by him; and therefore it cannot be a Duty in him to do so by me.

Again, It may be I could wish that some Laws of the Land were more accommodate to my convenience, and it is possible the Law-maker

maker might have contrived things more for my convenience, without any sin or fault on his part; yet so long as those Laws are just in themselves, and suited to the Publick Good, I cannot think it the Duty of the Supreme Magistrate so far to consult my particular Interest; for (turning the Tables) I should not have thought it to have been my own Duty in such a Case, therefore I ought in that Case not to complain, but in all reason to submit my private Interest to that of the Publick.

I will give one Example more (because this Point is a little obscure and difficult to be rightly explained otherwise than by Instances). It is certain that any Man would be loath to be put to death as a Malefactor, whatever the Case or his Demerit shall be: And I think I may take

take it for granted that there are several Cases wherein the Prince or Supreme Magistrate may pardon if he please, though the Malefactor justly deserve Death; Now sure it would be very absurd to conclude from hence, that therefore he ought to pardon me in such a Case, or to say that he is cruel in putting me to death, which I have otherwise deserved: For though I could wish for a Pardon, and he hath it in his power to give it me, yet it will not follow that he sins if he do not; for my own Heart doth not tell me that I was *bound* to do so in the like Case; and therefore if I make the same Measure serve for both Parties, I cannot (according to the Rule before us) pronounce that he *ought* to do so.

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Not therefore whatsoever I could honestly enough wish for at the hands of my Neighbour, nor every thing that it is lawful for him to do, is necessary to be done to me, but only that which I can reasonably judge (turning the Tables that so I may be impartial) to be the Duty of my Neighbour towards me, and that because I should think it to be my Duty towards him in the like Case, that is to be the Measure of my Expectations from him, and I may justly challenge that, and no more from him, upon this Rule of Equity.

Thus much hath been said hitherto, to prevent the straining of this Rule beyond the true reason and intent of it. Now to provide against the like Mistakes on the other hand, and to give it its true Scope and Latitude, I add two Particulars more, *viz.*

*Fourth-*

*Fourthly* then, It is to be considered, That as all men are equal in Nature (as we shewed before) and consequently whatsoever Treatment is due to one Man, must be so to another; Therefore this same Rule is to govern all Men in all their Actions and Intercourse one with another, without partiality or respect of Persons, of what Condition or Quality soever they be. For this is a Rule, not an Advice only, not a Thing which we may do well to observe, but matter of Law and Duty upon all Men. And therefore the *Prince* is obliged by it as well as Private men; for this being founded in primary Nature, is antecedent to all the several Ranks and Distinctions of Men. *It is* a Rule between Men of several Countries and Dominions, as well as between Neighbours; for our Saviour

## The Golden Rule.

hath shewed us that all Mankind are to be esteemed our Neighbours. *It is* to be observed between Men of severat Religions, as well as those that are of the same way of Worship; nay the same equitable Carriage is due to the Men of the most abject and senseless Opinions, as to those of the truest and most excellent Profession; for Mens weakness and folly (or whatever we impute their Errours to) destroys not their Natural Right to an equitable usage.

*It is* true amongst the People of the *Jews*, there was an Exception in this Case, and they were not bound to do to all Men as they would be done unto; for God (by a peculiar Dispensation) having condemned the Seven Nations to utter Destruction, had exempted them from the common Priviledges of Mankind: And  
besides,

besides his Divine Wisdom (having a design to separate the People of the *Jews* from all Nations of the Earth) not only instituted peculiar Rites for the distinction of this People from all others, but also (in pursuance of that end) allowed and required they should in some respect, treat all other People as Strangers. But when our Saviour came, that Wall of Partition was pulled down, and all the World were made one People; and from that time especially this Rule of Universal Equity takes place without Exception. And now no Man can be so inconsiderable, or of so despicable a Condition, but he hath an Interest in the Common Charity of Christians: No Man so remote from us in his Country or Habitation, or so different from us in Opinion, or so silly in his Understanding, or so vicious in his Manners, or so ill

temper'd for his Nature, but there is a common Tye of Equity between us and him, which no miscarriage of his can forfeit, nor any Power on Earth can dispense with. And therefore those that now confine Equity and Justice, and Charity to a Party, that imagine they can do no Wrong to a Dissenter, that fancy no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks, or the like, they revive the very Dregs of Judaism, and utterly destroy the great Design of Christianity, whilst they are ignorantly zealous of their own Opinions.

*Fifthly and Lastly*, It is to be observed, That this Passage of our Saviour's was not intended so much to be a Rule of Retribution or Requital, as of Kindness and primary Obligation. For it is not said, *Do to other Men as they do or have done to you; but as ye would they should do to you!* That is,  
 As



As if our Saviour had said, I would have my Disciples so prompt, and so inclined to good Offices towards each other, that I would not have them stay till an Obligation is laid upon them, and that then they should requite it with the like: But I would have Christians anticipate, begin, and be an Example of Kindness to one another, or to make Precedents and Instances of Beneficence where they find none, and so bring the World to be better natured. In a word, *To do that to others in the first place, which they would be glad to receive from others in the second place.* This, (I take it) is to interpret this Rule properly in an Evangelical Sense; for this is the peculiar Spirit of the Gospel, to oblige the Professors of it to be the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World, and the first Movers in every good thing. And to that

purpose it requires *We should love our Enemies, do good to them that hate us and persecute us. Not to be overcome of Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good; i. e. by Kindness and Beneficence to melt Men into good Nature: Which I think is the meaning of that Phrase of the Apostle, who tells us, by so doing We shall heap Coals of Fire on their Heads.*

It is a brutish thing to think our selves licensed to do Evil to others, because they have done so to us. It is a Pharisaical thing to do Good only in proportion to what is done to us; and it is a selfish stingy thing to do it upon that Motive, and in Expectation that it may be so done to us; but the temper of a Christian is to do good without invitation or provocation from the meer Benignity of his Nature, and out of meer Love of Beneficence; and then  
for

for the proportion of that Beneficence, that is to be so great, as what we would gladly meet with from others, if the Case was alter'd.

4. *I come now, as the fourth part of this short Discourse, to specify some of the principal Cases which this Axiom (so interpreted as aforesaid) will over-rule and determine, and consequently to shew of what great Influence it will be upon Human Affairs, if it be applied accordingly.*

And indeed the Use of this Rule is so general, and the Occasions of having recourse to it, are so frequent, that Experience only can most effectually shew the Importance of it. However, Since I am obliged to instance in some Particulars, I will specify these following (as they come to my thoughts) without being over-care-

## The Golden Rule.

careful of the Order in which I set them down.

*First*, The attending to this one Rule before us, would in a great measure prevent the Wars and Bloodshed that are in the World, and therewithal would hinder that Cruelty and Rapine, those Desolations of Countries, and Convulsions of Kingdoms, which are not more the Infelicities, than the Shame and Reproach of Mankind. And which almost as much take away the distinction between Man and Beast; as they destroy the Blessings and Comfort of Human Life.

I know the common pretence for War is, That between Sovereign Princes and States, there are no Common Tribunals to decide the Controversies, and therefore it is said there is a Necessity of Appealing to the great Sovereign of

of the World, *The Lord of Hosts*.  
 But is there no such thing as a  
 Court of Conscience or Common  
 Equity? Is there no Common  
 Law of Reason? Are there no  
 General Bonds of Human Socie-  
 ty? Is there no such Universal  
 Rule, as to *do as we would be  
 done by*?

If there be none, then the  
 Sword may Ravage the World,  
*Jusque datum sceleri*, and the great-  
 est Force hath the best Cause.  
 But if there be (as we have shew-  
 ed there is) then the considerati-  
 on of it; and application to it,  
 might end Disputes without the  
 Umpirage of the Sword; for then  
 Princes will be concerned in it as  
 well as Subjects; forasmuch as  
 when they put on the Diadem,  
 they do not put off the Men.  
 And then it will not seem war-  
 rantable to involve whole Nations  
 in Blood upon a *Punctilio* of Ho-  
 nour,

nour, or for the Glory of their own Name, or for Increase of Territory; or in a word, for what they can get. It will not then seem lawful to Invade another's Dominions, because that Prince is weak and unprovided; or to take Advantage of Intestine Divisions, or the Minority of the Prince, or the Corruption of his Ministers, or other Difficulties he labours under. For whosoever looks home will readily acknowledge, That he would not be so dealt with himself, and therefore ought to use the same Measure towards others. For (though *Inter arma silent Leges*, yet) the Court of Conscience is always open, Equity hath no Non-Term, written Laws may be interrupted, but this *Lex non scripta sed nata* is always of force.

It is said the Turks, before they engage in a War, are wont to consult their great *Musti* or *High-Priest* about the lawfulness of the Enterprize. And the Pagans of old used solemnly to advise with their Oracles in such Cases: And even amongst Christians a Consecrated Sword, or an Hallowed Banner from the chief Pontiff, uses to encourage the Expedition. But without that Ceremony and Pomp, here is an Oracle in our own Breast, which if Men would consult ingenuously, it would for the most part dissuade the War; or if it did not, it would marvellously tend to succeed the Prosecution. It would (I say) ordinarily be like to *Socrates* his *Genius* or *Good Angel*, which was observed by himself generally to Caution and Restrain him, but seldom or never to prompt or inflame him. Which, I remember

*Tully*

Tully saith, is no more than the constant *Genius* of every Wise man.

And if it shall happen that Wars be undertaken without asking the Counsel of this Oracle, (as too commonly they are) and withal be successful too, (which frequently they are not) yet the Injustice will blemish the Glory of the Victory: For even amongst the *Romans*, nothing more frequent in their own Histories, than to lay a Blot upon such Atchievements. So *Florus* leaves upon Record, *Cretici Belli nullam aliam fuisse Causam, quam Nobilis-Insulæ acquirendæ cupiditatem*: It was Covetousness, and not Justice, that moved that War. And to the same purpose *Ammianus Marcellinus*, speaking of the Enterprize upon *Cyprus*, saith, *Cypram insulam avidè magis, quam justè Populàm Romanum invasisse*. And to name no more, *Petronius*  
Arbiter



*Arbiter* hath blasted almost all the Glory of the Roman Arms in these few words;

— *Si quis sinus abditus ultra,  
Si qua foret Tellus quæ fulvum mitteret aurum,  
Hæstis erat, &c.*

So that it seems, even amongst that grasping and warlike Nation, there was an apprehension of the Obligation of Equity and Justice towards other People, and that they did not think that every thing was lawful to him that had the longest Sword. And therefore though this apprehension was not always sufficient to restrain their Covetousness and Ambition, yet it ought to have done, and shamed them when it did not.

But *Secondly*, If Princes and great States be not to be restrained by this Law, and Force must be

be the *Ratio ultima Regum*, yet sure amongst private Persons it may be attended to, and be of Authority enough to suppress Duels, and *the shedding of the Blood of War in Peace*, as the Scripture calls it; which is the most Savage and Belluine Custom that can be imagined, and so much worse than War it self, in that that hath some excuse, (as I intimated before) *viz.* because between Sovereign Princes there is no Superiour Court to Appeal to for Justice; whereas in this Case there is a Remedy in Human Judicatures: But especially it is intolerable that the Life of my Neighbour, and my own too, should be put upon the Point of the Sword, on the slightest Provocations, for a contumelious Expression which a Wise man would despise; nay, it may be, for a meer rash Word, or a Jest, which a great minded Man would not think worth his An-  
madversion.

madversion. Now if Men consulted their own Reason, or Conscience, or any thing, but meerly their Brutish Passion in such Cases, would they not make Allowance for such Follies and Inadvertencies in others? since they are not exempted from them, themselves: Would they be contented to answer with their Lives for every Indiscretion they have been Guilty of? If they can be so content, they are unworthy of Life who value it at so mean a rate: If they cannot, they confess themselves to proceed unjustly. But above all, why should not a Man in such a Case take his Measures from the fifth Particular in the Explication of this Rule, and take a Christian and a Noble Revenge indeed; that is, Why should he not forgive the Injury, and so be above his Adversary? the other way, at best, I put my self but upon the Level with him; but

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here

## The Golden Rule.

here I place my self above him, and triumph over him. Why should I not oblige him by Kindness, and heap Coals of Fire on his Head, and rather, like a brave Christian, do that which I wish he had done to me; than like a Beast, hurt him because he hath hurt me?

*Thirdly*, The Application of this Rule to our Practises, would tend very much to the prevention of another Evil, not much inferiour to either of the former, namely Law-Suits, which in truth are but another kind of War, and are usually managed with as much Malice and Rancour as War it self. Certainly they are a great Reproach to Christendom, and to this Nation in particular. It is an unhappy Observation (of some Body) *That what the Moors spend at the Follities of their Weddings, the Jews at the Solemnity of their Passover,*

*Passover, that and more the Christians expend in Law-Suits.* And it is verily thought that the whole Expence of Law in *England*, is equal to the Charge of a Foreign War. But it is not only the Expence of Mony that is deplorable in this Case, but the imbroyling Mens. Spirits, the inflaming their Passions, the hinderance and scandal to Religion, and the intailing of Quarrels upon Posterity. Now if these things were fatally necessary and unavoidable, it were in vain to complain and aggravate the matter; but there is a Remedy at hand, if we would make use of it: Time hath been when it was otherwise, and therefore it may be so again. *What* (saith the Apostle 1 Cor. 6. 5.) *is there not a Wise man amongst you? no not one that shall be able to judge between his Brethren?* But especially is there no such thing as Conscience of Equity? Have we

not a Judge within us? Is not this Law before us sufficient to determine our Quarrels? Let but the Plaintiff put himself in the Case of the Defendant, and the Defendant suppose himself in the place of the Plaintiff, and both shall easily see what is fit to be done, and Matters will be amicably composed.

*Fourthly*, The Observation of this Rule would as well advance the Interest and Reputation of the Christian Church, as the Quiet of the World; for it would at once both prevent most of those Severities that Christians too frequently use one towards another upon the account of Religion, and also put a stop to the Clamours upon that Occasion. It is undeniably true, That very hard things have been done upon the Score of Propagating or Preserving the Truth and Purity of Religion. And it is

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as true, That very great Noises and Complaints have been made of Persecution, when perhaps there hath been no just Cause for it. And there is hardly to be found any great Party of Men that can clearly wash their Hands of both these Miscarriages, and few that can quit themselves of either of them: For it hath too ordinarily happened, That the same Persons who have at one time been too unchristianly harsh toward others, have at another time been as blameably too tender and sensible when the Tyde hath been turned, and it is become their own Case: Forgetting in the former Instance to do as they would be done unto; and not considering in the other Instance, That if what they did before was just towards others, it ought not to be Matter of Complaint when it comes home to themselves.

There is no doubt but there is a vast difference between these two things, and that it is far better to complain unjustly, than to do cruelly; yet neither are to be excused: For as by the former, *viz.* Exclaiming of Persecution without just Ground, not only a general Odium is kindled against those that out of Zeal pursue those severe Methods; but oftentimes the State and Civil Government is indanger'd by the Flames kindled thereupon: So by the latter, (I mean Persecution properly so called) Religion it self is made odious, and loses its principal Glory of being Rational, and commending it self by its own Light; and Men are tempted to suspect that to be destitute of good proof, which needs to be supported by Force, and (so like Colours in the dark) all Religions are alike, when the use of Reason is laid aside, and

Force



Force supplies the room of it. And consequently all study and ingenious ways of improving Mens minds are superseded; for where it is become the fashion to knock Men on the Head that will not be Converted, it will not seem worth the while to take the pains to convince them. And in short, the very temper of Religion it self, will in time be supplanted, and only a dull sottish Compliance upon implicit Faith, and a formal Hypocrisie succeed in the room of it.

But now ( as I said ) both these Mischiefs may be avoided by a due Application of the Maxim before us : For on the one side, As for those blind Zealots that are always most fierce and forward in Persecution, though they have little or no Conscience, yet they cannot be without this Principle of Self-love; and though they have not Judgment to discern the diffe-

rence of things, yet they may turn the Tables and change the Scale, and see how things look on both sides.

As for Example ; I would fain have another Man be of my Opinion , yet sure it will not look well to knock him on the Head if he be not : For, turning the Tables, I find that I would not be so dealt with in the like Case: Especially seeing he is a Man , and I am no more ; and consequently I am no more infallible than he is ; and therefore he hath as much right to persecute me into his Opinion , as I have to force him into mine.

Or suppose I would be glad that the way I am of, should be encouraged , and the contrary discouraged , but however it will not be fit to starve all those that dissent from it ; for I should think it great Cruelty to be so dealt with myself. But

But it may be, the way I am of, is that which hath publick Allowance, and is reputed the most Orthodox: yet if I look into my self, I find that I cannot be of what Opinion I will: And if it was my Fortune to be Heterodox, I should think it hard to be rackt up to the Publick Standard; therefore such Usage cannot be equal towards other Men.

But perhaps some Man will say, Are then all Opinions alike? Is there no Advantage to be given to Truth above Errour? Is not the one to be propagated with all our might, and the other to be as carefully suppressed? I answer, Yes doubtless; there is a very different treatment due to Truth than to Errour, provided we be sure which is which. For otherwise, one Man is apt to be as confident of his Perswasion, as another Man can be

be of his ; therefore it is fit that Infallible Wisdom should determine between them , and that can be no otherwise done than by the plain and expresse Letter of Holy Scripture. Without this Umpirage we may indulge our own Fancies and Passions under a Notion of Zeal of God and Truth. But if there be plain and expresse Scripture in the Case , then ( though it always becomes a Christian to incline to the side of Tenderneſs and Mercy, yet) for my part (till I am better informed ) I ſhall not call it Perſecution to make a great difference in the Countenance and Encouragement I give to that which is ſo warranted. And if this was not true, then it would follow that whenſoever I meet with any Severities made uſe of in the Holy Scripture in the Caſe of Religion ( of which we have frequent Inſtances in the Old Teſtament eſpecially ) I muſt call that alſo a Culpable Perſecution :

which I am sure I ought not to do. But if it come to this Point, and all Persecution be stopt, but where the Truth is defined expressly by God himself, the first Mischief is cured (for ought I know) as far as it ought to be.

On the other side, as for those querulous Persons who are apt to complain before they art hurt, and to scandalize the Laws, and reflect on their Governours, under the Notion of Persecution, their Noise would be stilled if they attended to this Rule of Equity, and doing as they would be done to. It is true, I would have my Conscience to my self, and think it horribly tyrannical, that any Body should impose upon me to believe as he pleases. But on the other side, If I must have my own Opinion, must I have my Will too? Must I be uppermost in the State? and be put in Power and Authority equal  
with

with other Men, or else I am persecuted? Nay, must I not only enjoy my own Conscience, but affront other Mens, or else I am rigorously dealt with? Must I have liberty to scorn and blaspheme another Religion, or else I am not suffered comfortably to enjoy my own? In a word, Is my Birthright violated, and my Natural Liberty of choosing my own Religion infringed, if the Publick Religion of the Country, and that which is established by the Laws, be encouraged by the Advantages of Publick Maintenance? Surely these are very extravagant Collections, and any Man that turns the Tables, will easily discern them to be so, and to contain more of Humour than Conscience; for whatsoever Allowance I ought to make in favour of Liberty and Conscience, yet reflecting upon my self impartially, I am certain that if my Religion was the Publick Establishment,

ment, I should think somewhat the more respect due to it upon that account: And if I was then in Authority (though I would deprive no man of his Natural Rights for not complying with the Publick Opinion, yet) I would be sure to encourage and prefer those that thought and professed as I did; nay, it may be I should proceed so far, as to put some Mark of distinction upon those that did not so. And I should be so far from pulling down those Fences or Outworks which the Wisdom of my Ancestors had provided for the Security of that Religion which I was perswaded was the Truth, that I would not stick to restrain (by some fit Punishments) those Insolent People who could not be content with their own Liberty, without affronting mine and the establisht Religion. And all this I should not doubt to do without incurring the odious Name of a

*Persecutor.*

*Persecutor.* And therefore since I should think it lawful to do all this, were the Case my own, *viz.* That I was on the advantage Ground, and had the Laws on my side: I cannot with any colour of Reason complain if thus much, and no more, be done to me when I am on the wrong side of the Hedge, and maintain only a private and disallowed Opinion.

Again *Fifthly*, The framing of our selves by this Rule of doing as, &c. would produce another Temper and Spirit than is commonly seen in the Age we live in, especially in the managing of Disputes and Controversies in Religion, whether by way of private Conference, or publick Writings. The Heats and Passions, the Taunts and Scorns, and Contumelious Treatments of one another in these Affairs, are scandalous



alous to a Proverb, *Odium Theologorum*. Men not only fill up the void Places or Intervals of their Discourses with Reproaches, but blot both sides of their Paper with such filthy stuff.

Now I will not only say that this Carriage is utterly unbecoming Christianity, which requires and produces (wherever it prevails effectually) the most Mild, Innocent, and Dove-like Temper: Nor will I say only that this kind of Management is most peculiarly undecent in so grave and solemn an Affair as Religion is: But that which I would say is, That whosoever consults his own Breast, would never be guilty of this Fault towards any sort of men, since he will find there, That he would not be dealt with so himself. I know my Adversary thinks otherwise than I do; but why may not he think as well as I; or  
how

how far do I differ from him, more than he doth from me? I am content therefore he should urge me with his Reasons, because I would do so by him: But instead of hard Arguments, I would not have him pelt me with hard Words; and therefore I ought not to do so by him. Let him stick upon the Merits of the Cause, but not blemish my Person or Reputation. I take it to be a sign a Man is destitute of good Proofs, when *furor arma ministrat*, and when Passion supplies the place of Reason; and if it be so in another, it is no better in me. I will not therefore make use of contemptuous Reflections, sly Insinuations, malicious Innuendo's, witty Sarcasms against him, because I think it both absurd and unjust that he should do so against me. And besides, I consider that if my Cause be good, I shall not need to resort to such Artifices;

and

and if it be bad, this Course will not mend it, but rather make my Temper appear as bad as my Cause.

But that which I peculiarly aim at in this place, is, (if it were possible) to repress the odious Imputation of Heresie to one another, in Disputations, which yet is the usual Complement that passes in such Cases. I remember it was the saying of S. Jerom, *In crimine Hæreseos neminem volo esse patientem.* He lookt upon the Charge of Heresie to be so horrid and deadly a Stab, that it would tempt the Patience of a Saint. Now if no Man can, or, (as the holy Man thought) ought to bear it; for the same Reason, and much more, no man ought so liberally to bestow it, as is commonly done. Besides that, Heresie in the very Notion of it implies Contumacy and Stubbornness added to Errour;

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and if any man can find in his heart to upbraid another with his Errours, (which may be involuntary) yet it is sure hard to know his heart, so as to pronounce peremptorily that he is Self-condemned, and sins against his own Conscience. At least, I would think it very disingenuous for any man to judge so of me, and therefore I ought not rashly to pronounce so of him.

Moreover *Sixthly*, The practise of this way of Reflection, and taking an Estimate of other men by our selves, would prevent Heart-burnings, Jealousies, and Suspensions; which are the Seed-plot of most of the Mischiefs amongst Mankind, and the very Bane of Human Society: For it is but looking inward, and I find that I think it just that a fair and candid Interpretation be made of my Actions; I conceive my self  
to

to be ill dealt with, if I be thought  
to intend contrary to my Pretensi-  
ons; nay if there be any thing  
dark and doubtful in the Case, I  
expect so much Charity from men,  
as that they think the best that  
can be made of it, till the Truth  
appears.

Therefore if I will be true to  
my own Principles, and impartial  
towards others, it is manifest that  
after this manner I should interpret  
other mens Thoughts and Actions:  
Not judge the Tree to be bad  
when I see the Fruit good: Not  
censure a man for an Hypocrite,  
meerly because he looks like a  
Saint; not pronounce of mens  
hearts in a direct Contrariety to  
their Words and Actions. In a  
word, not to subvert all the Foun-  
dations of Friendship, and to Poison  
Society by ill Surmizes.

Upon this Occasion I remember a remarkable Case between the Pagans and the Primitive Christians. It was the Custom of those good men to hold their Assemblies for Religion very privately, and for the most part by night; upon this Occasion there was a Jealousie raised amongst the Pagans, that something or other was done in those Nocturnal Meetings which would not indure the Light: and in a little while this Suspicion was improved into a common Fame, That these Christians in those Clandestine Assemblies, were wont to murder an innocent Infant, and then to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood amongst them, as the Solemn Rite of their Confederation in that Religion. Now this groundless Scandal those Primitive Christians quit themselves of, by appealing to the Common Sense of Human Nature, and this Rule

of

of Equity which we are all this while considering; and in their Apologies make use of this Dilemma: *Could you Pagans find in your hearts to perpetrate so horrid a Villany under the pretence of Religion, as you accuse us of? If you could, you condemn your selves of Barbarism and Cruelty beyond the rate of Mankind: But if ye could not, then you are as extremely unjust in suspecting us (without Ground) of being Guilty of that which is so abhorrent to Human Nature.*

But there is one thing more I would have considered under this Head; namely, Whether the attending to this Rule would not prevent Sedition in the State, as well as evil Thoughts amongst private Persons? It is certain, all Tumults and Rebellions begin in Jealousies of the Designs of Governours, and thence proceed to

Insolencies and Contemptuous Carriage towards the Government it self; and then when men are engaged so far, they stick at nothing which may tend to the Ruin and Subversion of that which they have both already condemned in their thoughts, and render'd themselves obnoxious too. Now would such men be so ingenuous, as in the first place to make Allowance for such Human Infirmities in Magistrates, as (consulting their own Bosoms) they must needs acknowledge themselves not to be exempted from; and be so candid as to think no worse of other mens Designs (till the contrary appears) than they would have thought of their own: And then especially would they (as I have often said) turn the Tables, and suppose themselves for a while in the place of their Governours, they would then easily conclude, That it was not ingenuous to make cross-



cross-grain'd and perverse Interpretations of all dark and doubtful Passages: Forasmuch as every man of any Sense knows, that if he was in Publick Authority, he should and must do several things, upon the Interest of Government, which he ought not presently to make every Body privy to the Reasons of, and yet he would think it unjust to be malapertly censured for them. And the same man (be he who he will) in those Circumstances, would not allow that every private *Caprichio* and perverse Fancy should confront publick Order; but would expect that whilst he sustain'd that part, some Veneration should be used towards his Person for the sake of the Character he bears, and that Obedience be yielded to all his (not unlawful) Injunctions. And therefore by the Rule of Equity every such Person is bound, being a private man, to carry himself with

the like regard towards those that are his Superiours. And thus (as I said) the Seeds of Sedition and Rebellion would be nipt in the Bud.

Again *Seventhly*, The due consideration of this Maxim would cure that ill-natur'd Humour of rubbing up old Sores, and upbraiding one another with former Follies and Miscarriages: A Custom it is equally rife and mischievous, and I know not whether more uncharitable or imprudent, whether more fatally obstructing the Reformation of others, or more improvidently rebounding upon those that practise it.

*It is in the first place* very dishonourable to reproach men for those Follies they have out-grown, and to upbraid them with those Sins they have repented of and for-

forſaken. It is hard that no Time nor Merit ſhould efface Human Miſcarriages! That mortal and ſinful men ſhould never forgive one another, who every day need forgiveness of God Almighty: That Men ſhould find pleaſure to rake in the Wounds of their Brethren! *And it is* that which almoſt invincibly tempts men to continue evil when they are brought to deſpair of ever being believed to be good; for what Engine hath either God or Man ever found out to mend the ſtate of the World, other than that of Hope, the force of which is everlaſtingly defeated by this malicious Treatment of rubbing the old Sore, and keeping it perpetually bleeding; when Sorrow ſhall not be allowed to cover mens ſhame, nor Repentance be ſufficient to draw a Veil over paſt Follies. *And it infallibly* provokes Requital with a Vengeance; for ſeeing nothing is more tender  
and

and sensible than this Point of Reputation, there is no doubt but those who find they shall be admitted to no Propitiation, will endeavour to extenuate their own Guilt by rendring others as black as themselves, and being debarred the most natural and human way of Satisfaction, will right themselves upon such implacable men by way of Reprisal. *And* who is there that hath not Spots enough, if Envy pry into them, and whose Blemishes will not look hideously if Malice survey them? And who will not seem an ugly Monster if he be not only placed in a bad Light, but his Picture be drawn by ill Nature in Gall and Soot? And who is there so destitute of these Instruments of Revenge, if Despair put him upon doing his worst? Who is there that hath not been mistaken in his Youth? Who hath not been tempted, surprized, abused one time

time or other? Who hath not had his Prejudices of Education, or been overseen in the management of himself? Who hath not been over-reacht and imposed upon by cunning men, or not confounded by the several Traverses of State and Revolutions of the World? So that if it must be the way of the World everlastingly to blazon one anothers Follies, it will come to pass that he that is best conceited of himself, will find he must fall in his value, and that he will not pass current at the Rate he sets upon himself. But especially it will happen that he, who to ostentate his own Innocency, is continually pointing at the Failings of others, will find in his Accounts, That he hath been as improvident for himself, as he was inexorable towards others.

But

The Golden Rule.

But that which I am obliged to observe in this Case, and that in order to the Cure of this Distemper, is only the plain Injustice and Unequality of this way of proceeding, even upon the Principles of every man's own heart, for it is indubitable that every man would be desirous that his blind side should be concealed, that a Veil should be drawn over his Blemishes, and that an Act of Oblivion should pass upon his former Miscarriages; and besides, he thinks it very unjust that other men should represent him by the Follies he hath outgrown, and charge him with the Opinions he hath abandoned, or upbraid him with the Actions he hath repented of: And he would be taken for what he is, and not what he was. Therefore upon the Rule of Equity, thus should it be done by every Man towards his Neighbour.

*Eighthly*

*Eighthly and Lastly*, and to conclude this Point: The studying of this one Aphorism (of doing as we would be done by) would prevent all the Frauds, Cheatings, and Oppressions that are so great an Evil to the World, and which are otherwise scarcely to be Cured or Restrained by all the Laws, Judicatories, and Punishments that men can devise; for this defines them, detects, convicts, condemns, and shames them at a Bar which no man can Appeal from, or Except against. In Human Judicatories men may hope to conceal their Miscarriages, or to excuse, or to palliate, or to out-face them; either by defect of Evidence to escape the Trial, or by the Advantage of Wit or Mony, or Power or Friends, to elude the Judgment; some Cases the Law cannot reach, or the Witnesses cannot

## The Golden Rule.

not depose and swear home to the Point, or the Jury cannot penetrate into the Mystery of the Business: But here *quid prodest non habere Conscium, habenti Conscientiam?* There will want no Witnesses, no Inquest, no Judge, but a mans own self; and he that is faulty, his own Heart shall upbraid him, for debauching his own Principles, and his Countenance shall fall, and his Spirit sink under the Sentence.

No man that Consults this Oracle will find in his heart to oppress his Neighbour by Power and Interest, or vex him with Law-Suits, or undermine him by Fraud, or over-reach him by Tricks of Wit, or make advantage of the Weakness, Simplicity, Necessity, or Security of his Neighbour. No man's Table will be made a Snare to him; no man will flatter his Friend to circumyent him,



or make use of *Summum Jus*, and the rigour of Laws to Ruin his very Enemy; or if he do, this Court of Equity within him will reverse the Proceedings, and severely revenge the Contempt of its Authority. This Principle (I say) of Self-love which sticks close to our Natures, and is always before our Eyes, if it be but applyed to the Case of other men, after the manner we have expressed, will determine us to just and righteous, to fair and candid, and ingenuous Dealings: For whatsoever I would not that others should do to me, that I must not do towards them. And so much for that.

*Fifthly, I come now in the last place, and for a Conclusion of all, to Represent some of the happy Advantages of pursuing this Rule, as so many Motives to the careful observance*

## The Golden Rule.

*vance of it. And out of many of this kind that lie obvious to my thoughts, I will only select these three following.*

I. Though it be true (as I have noted before) That this Maxim is not properly a Rule of Religion or Devotion towards God, but only the Measure of the Second Table, yet it is of so great Reputation and Authority, that it gives the Publick Stamp and Value to Piety and Devotion it self, forasmuch as without there be a conspicuous regard to this Rule in our intercourse with men, the most glorious pretences of Piety towards God, signifie nothing either with God or Men. A mighty Zeal in disputing and contending about Opinions, without regard to Equity, and Justice, and Mercy, is but a kind of Religious Knight-Erranty, and Men encounter  
only

only Windmills and Pageants, they neither Honour God, nor Profit the World, nor gain Reputation to themselves: Nay, I think such Zeal will not be much undervalued, if it be resembled to *Solomon's* doting Expeditions, when he made long Voiages for Apes and Peacocks. To be wonderfully devout in a peculiar Form or Mode of Worship, without Honesty and Ingenuity in our Dealings with Men, will be lookt upon as the Hypocritical acting of a Part, or at best as being bigotted to a certain Mode without any true Notion or Sense of Religion. In a word, To make the most glorious Profession, and to espouse the precisest Sect and Party, without an equal regard to this, will at least be look'd upon as an effect of Pride and Singularity, and be more than suspected as a Cloke for Knavery. For of all Religions in the

F World,

World, Christianity is that of all other, which he can make the least pretence to, who *Tythes Mint, and Annis, and Cummin, and neglects the weightier Matters of Faith, Justice, and Mercy.* Our Saviour himself hath told us, That God loves Mercy more than Sacrifice; and is better pleased with our equitable dealing with our Neighbour, than with the most costly Oblations to himself. And his Apostle S. James declares, That pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is to visit the Fatherless and Widow in their Affliction, &c. Nay, an Heathen, but an ingenuous Observer of the Genius of the Christian Religion, gives this Account of it, *Nil nisi justum suadet & leve,* That there was nothing so remarkable in that Institution, as the Justice, Mildness, Clemency, and Equity it requires of all its Profelytes.

Mat. 23. 23.

Mat. 9. 13.

Jam. 1. 27.

Am. Martell.

It is a memorable Passage we have in *Tertullian*, one of the ancientest Writers in the Christian Church, Some of the Heathens of that time upbraided the Christians, That they took up their Religion to save Charges, and made choice not of the best, but the cheapest way of Worship, For (say they) you refuse to sacrifice to our Gods for no other reason, but to spare the cost of the Oblations, and the Trade and Customs of the Eastern Commodities of rich Gums and Spices decays, by your refraining to expend them in Incense to the Deity, so that not only Religion is less magnificent, but the Emperours Exchequer is damnified by your frugal way of Devotion. To this *Tertullian* answers in the Name of the Christians: 'Tis true, we do not evaporate so much of our Wealth in the vain Superstition of Odours and Perfumes, but we spend

more in Acts of Charity towards the Poor and Necessitous than all your Devotion amounts to ; and this we look upon as a more acceptable Sacrifice , and a sweeter Odour to the Almighty. And besides, we do indeed spend more of those very Commodities in the Burial and decent Treating our deceased Friends, than you do in all your Idolatries. And as for the Emperours Exchequer , it gains more by our Honesty and Integrity , and the Conscience we make of Defrauding it , than by your lavish and expensive Superstition , who thus think to bribe your Gods, that you may be allowed to cheat your Prince.

Certainly there is nothing like down-right Honesty to give Reputation to Religion , insonmuch that it is not only the most popular Argument in the World to recommend it by , but it is able to perswade a man to the most im-

improbable Doctrine ( otherwise ) if he could be convinced that this is the Fruit of it. But on the other side , when men shall highly pretend to Devotion, and yet appear not only disingenuous and unjust , but unmerciful , cruel , and sanguinary too , an indifferent man will be tempted to be of that poor *Indians* mind , who would not go to Heaven when he was told that such a sort of men were there.

2. The observation of this Rule is so considerable , and so acceptable with God , that it seems to be the most effectual way to obtain Success in our Prayers and Addresses to him. For it is remarkable , that upon that very Occasion this Aphorism was delivered by our Saviour in the fore-mentioned place, *Matth. 7.* where when he had said , *verse 7. Ask and it shall be given you, &c.* and

## The Golden Rule.

verse 11. *If ye being evil know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him.* He there immediately adds, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* As if by those words (*men do unto you*) he had meant (according to the usual way of expression in the Hebrew Tongue) indefinitely, and had said, *Whatsoever ye would have to be done unto you, either from God or Man.* Or more at large, as if our Saviour had said, *Do ye to Men as you desire God should do to you; for by the measures you use towards one another, ye do (upon the matter) prescribe to your selves what measure ye are to expect from him.*



To this purpose it is further observable, that in our Lord's Prayer we are taught to use this Argument with God Almighty, *To forgive us our Trespases, for that we forgive them that Trespas against us; for (saith our Saviour) if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive yours.*

Moreover, It is yet further observable, that in the Old Testament, particularly *Deut. 26. 12.* God gives the People of *Israel* warrant to plead with him in their Addresses, and to challenge a Blessing from him, upon the Condition of their having discharged their part in Justice, Charity, and Humanity towards their Brethren: For thus he speaks, *When thou hast made an end of thy Tything of the third year, and hast given it to the Stranger,*

*the Fatherless, and the Widow, then thou shalt plead before the Lord, &c. Look down now from thy Habitation, and bless thy People Israel. But most fully and expressly is this set out in the New Testament, Luke 6. 38. where after our Saviour had specified several Instances of Equity and Humanity, as Love your Enemies, and do good; Give to him that asketh; Lend (to men in necessity) looking for nothing again; Be merciful as your Father in Heaven is merciful; he adds, Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; forgive and it shall be forgiven you; Give and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together. He concludes all with the assurance of the success of this Course, For with the same Measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*

But

But to conclude all, whatever be the Success or Advantages of observing this Rule, otherwise, a man shall be sure to reap the Fruit of inward Peace, and Comfort, and Satisfaction in so doing; nor will it be in the Power of Chance, or the Event of Things to discompose him; for whatever may happen, or how malicious interpretations soever may be made of a man's Actions, yet whilst he is sure he hath been true to his own Conscience, and the aforesaid Principle, he is not only above the Malice and Follies of Men, but above Fear and Suspicion of Mischief to befall him. Or if he chance to meet with ill Treatment from Men, he can easily bear it, because he is sure he hath not deserved it. So that the Retreat into a Man's self is the great Refuge from Troubles abroad, and the Reflection upon

a Man's Integrity in this great Point, is the principal Consolation of Human Life.

With this holy *Job* comforted himself in his Adversity, *Job 29.12.* *I delivered the Poor that cryed, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the Widows heart to sing for joy. I put on Righteousness and it clothed me, and my Judgment was as a Robe and a Diademe. I was Eyes to the blind, and Feet was I to the lame. I was a Father to the Poor, and the Cause which I knew not I searched out. I brake the Jaws of the Wicked, and I pluckt the Prey out of his Teeth, &c.* In all which that good Man elegantly sets forth the great Support and Comfort it afforded him now in his Adversity, that he had heretofore in his Prosperity dealt equitably

equitably, and mercifully, and consider'd other Mens Case as his own.

And after this rate *David* also comforts himself in his Troubles, *Psalms 35. 12. They rewarded me evil for good : But as for me, when they were sick, my Clothing was Sackcloth ; I behaved my self as if it had been my Friend, or my Brother ; and then Appeals to God hereupon. verse 24. Judge me, O Lord, according to thy Righteousness.*

On the other side, it will be an horrible Aggravation of our Trouble when Adversity befalls us, if we shall have just cause to make this Reflection ; *Thus, and thus I dealt with others when I was in Prosperity, and now it is come home to me ; I had no sense of Equity and Humanity towards others then, and I must now justly expect*

*pect, they will have as little towards me.*

Doubtless it was no small Anguish *Adonibefek* was under, *Judges* 1. 7. when his Guilt extorted this sad Acknowledgment from him, *Threescore and ten Kings having their Thumbs and great Toes cut off, gather'd their Meat under my Table; as I have done, so God hath requited me: q. d.* In my Prosperity I was so vain and improvident, as either to forget that I was but a Man, or that others were so too: I neither considered the parity of Human Nature, nor the mutability of Human Affairs; I was so sottishly insolent then, as to treat my Equals like Dogs, and how can I now expect they should treat me like a Man? Certainly it was an heavy Aggravation of *Hamon's* Shame and Sufferings ( in the Book of *Esther* ) that he must be hanged on  
the

the same Gallows he had provided for the pious, but brow-beaten *Mordecai*. And *Perillus* roared most hideously when he was roasted in the brazen Bull which he had devised for the Torture of others. And to add no more Examples of this kind, we may easily bethink our selves what a dreadful Remorse and Horrible Agony of Mind *Joseph's* Brethren were in, *Genes. 42. 21.* when they themselves came to be in straits, and reflect upon their former unnatural dealing with their Brother, they cry out one to another, *We are verily Guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us.* It is therefore all the Wisdom and Reason in the World, since we know not how soon it may be our turn to be at the lower part of the Wheel, to temper

temper our selves with Equity and Moderation whilst we are uppermost, according to the Counsel of our Saviour, *To make us Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*; and then to do to others as at another time we would wish and think fit they should do by us; which was the Point I began with, and with which I now make an end.

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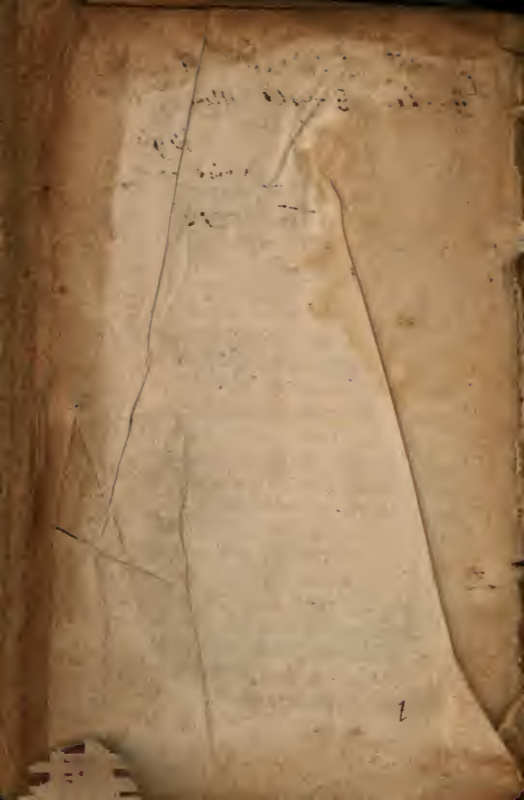
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